

## FIRST PRINCIPLES IN ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

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### 1. THE LIMITS OF PRACTICAL REASON

ARISTOTLE thinks reason is practical in so far as it is deliberative; it guides action because of its role in the thought about ends and means which causes an agent to decide and act for some goal. Since he believes that moral reasoning is just a special case of practical reasoning, the role of reason in moral thought and action will depend on its role in thought about means and ends. Now Aristotle seems to restrict practical thought quite severely, and to exclude many important questions about action from its scope. For he seems to say it is concerned only with means to ends, not with ends themselves. We may reject this account of practical thought about means and ends, or we may reject it as an account of moral thought, and say that moral thinking does not have to take ultimate ends for granted, because it is not primarily concerned with means and ends at all.

I want to see how Aristotle restricts practical reason, and what his restriction implies about practical thought in general and especially about moral thought.<sup>1</sup> Some critics have challenged the account which finds a restricted view of practical reason in Aristotle. Though I will use several of their arguments, I mainly want to explore his less discussed claim that practical first principles are analogous to first principles of theoretical sciences in being beyond reasoning and argument. I will ask what the analogy means, and how it fits the rest of Aristotle's views on practical reason. This inquiry will raise some general questions about his views on justification of ultimate principles.

The evidence for a restricted view of practical reason is familiar. No one, Aristotle, insists, deliberates about ends, but only about what is towards an end or contributes to it, presumably (we might suppose) the means to the end (*EN* 1111b26–30, 1112b11–16, 1113b3–4, *EE* 1226a7–17, b10–14, 1227a5–15, 1227b23–33; see, *MM* 1189a5–12,

25-7, 1190a2-7). We do not deliberate about whether to be happy, but about making money or taking risks for the sake of happiness, nor about whether to be healthy, but about walking or running for the sake of health (*EN* 1111b26-30, *EE* 1226a7-14, *MM* 1189a8-12). An orator does not deliberate about persuading, nor a politician about producing obedience to good laws, nor a rhetor about healing, but about how to achieve these ends (*EN* 1112b11-15). The means are the concern of deliberation, but the end is the object of wish (*boulēsis*) (*EN* 1111b26; cf. *EE* 1226a8); and so presumably wish does not involve deliberation.

Some of this may seem uncontroversial. Any deliberation must begin somewhere, and take some end as given, not to be questioned now; if we always questioned, we could never begin deliberation. But what is the status of the end we begin from? Aristotle will surely agree that some states of affairs are sometimes ends, and sometimes means to further ends; if today I decide to buy a bicycle to take exercise, taking exercise is my end; but yesterday I may have decided to take exercise to keep healthy. Is every end an end only for a particular deliberation, and possibly a means for some other deliberation? Or are some states of affairs always just ends, and therefore never subject to deliberation?

Aristotle seems to take the second view in the *Eudemian Ethics*, when he compares the status of ends in practical thought to the status of first principles in a theoretical, demonstrative science:

Since whoever deliberates always deliberates for the sake of something, and there is some target for the deliberator towards which he examines what is beneficial, no one deliberates about the end, but it is a first principle (*archē*) and assumption (*hupothesis*), like the assumptions in the theoretical sciences — we have spoken of these briefly at the beginning, and with exactness in the *Analytics* ... (1227a5-12).

Later he repeats the comparison between ends and hypotheses:

Does virtue create the goal or the things towards the goal? We lay it down that it creates the goal; for there is no argument (*sullogismos*) or reasoning (*logos*) about that, but is to be assumed (*hupokeisthō*) like a first principle. For the doctor does not examine if the patient should be healthy or not, but whether he should walk, nor the gymnastic teacher whether the pupil should be in good condition or not, but whether he should wrestle or not; nor does any other craft deliberate about its end. For just as in the theoretical sciences the assumptions are first principles, so in the productive sciences too the end is the first principle and assumption; since this man is to be healthy, something else must be present if that is to come about, just as in a theoretical science, if a triangle contains two right angles, this must be true (1227b23-33).

And in a book common to the *EN* and *EE* Aristotle uses the same analogy to explain how someone grasps the end;

Virtue preserves the first principle and vice corrupts it; and in action the end is the first principle, just as hypotheses are in mathematics; for in neither case does reason teach the first principles; but in actions either natural or habituated virtue teaches right opinion about the first principle (1151a15-19).<sup>2</sup>

What does this analogy with scientific hypotheses mean? What does it imply about the status of practical ends? How far do Aristotle's general views on practical reason support it? Do any of his views raise difficulties for the analogy?

## 2. HYPOTHESES

The reference to hypotheses is clarified by the account of a demonstrative science, in the *Posterior Analytics*. A scientific truth is known when it is derived by the right kind of syllogism from true and necessary premises which explain the conclusion (*APo.* 71b9–25). The premises must be primary and immediate, and better known by nature than the conclusion (71b21–2, b26–72a8), since, Aristotle claims, there can be no demonstration in any argument involving infinite regress or circularity; either of these arguments fails to prove the original proposition (72b18–73a6). The right kinds of premises for demonstration are hypotheses (72a18–24).<sup>3</sup> These justify all the derived truths of the science, but are not themselves justified by their role in the science; if we argued that something is a first principle because other important truths can be derived from it, that would be the circular argument Aristotle rejects. The scientist must not argue for his principles or defend them against objections (77b3–15, *Phys.* 184b25–185a14, 253a31–b6, *Top.* 172a17–21). When these defences have been forbidden, Aristotle must say how we are aware of hypotheses in some way that makes them first principles justifying the other truths of the science. This question is answered by his doctrine of intuitive intellect (*nous*).<sup>4</sup>

Despite obscurities and ambiguities in his doctrine, it is fair to say that Aristotle expects intuitive intellect to be the cognitive grasp of a proposition which makes it a first principle, whether he calls this grasp a kind of non-demonstrative knowledge (72b18–25), or a state prior to knowledge (100b5–17; see, *GA* 742b30). It is no less fair to say that the whole conception of intuitive intellect in this role, and the whole project which requires it, are misconceived. On Aristotle's view we do not grasp a truth by intuitive intellect *because* we treat it as the first principle of a science; that would be merely conventional priority, and we might choose to axiomatize the science differently, with different first principles. For Aristotle, this account of priority would put the cart before the horse; for him, a proposition is a first principle because it is grasped by intuitive intellect, not the other way round. But he does not explain how we can be warranted in claiming that a proposition, considered by itself apart from its inferential relations to any others, is so securely true that it deserves primary place in a science; and unless we can claim this, the first principles will not be non-conventionally prior and better known, and there will be no demonstration. At least this much of Aristotle's doctrine of intuitive intellect is essential for his general account of demonstrative science; and the failures here expose the radical mistake in the general account.

Aristotle does not expect us to grasp a first principle by intuitive intellect without previous inquiry. It is a universal truth, reached by argument from "appearances," from observation of what appears to happen in the world or from dialectical argument about what appears to be true to most people, expressed in what they say (*APr.* 46a17–27, *Top.* 101a34–b4).<sup>5</sup> The true universal judgment which results must be grasped by intuitive intellect (*APr.* 68b27, *APo.* 88a14–17). Aristotle may be saying correctly that a universal conclusion from these arguments must be more than a summary of the inductive evidence for it, and that this "taking universally" is the function of intellect. But this point will not show how intellect makes a judgment secure and non-conventionally prior to the other truths of a science. The universal assertion of a conclusion from observation or dialectic makes the conclusion more, not less, risky and doubtful; it will be justified by its role in the science it belongs to; and both of these results conflict with Aristotle's doctrine about the non-conventional priority of first principles. His epistemology still requires a non-inferential grasping by intuitive intellect; but, naturally he cannot explain why some judgments and not others qualify for

this strange grasping, without justifying them by appeal to evidence and consequences, which do not prove enough for his purposes. When we consider Aristotle's method of reaching first principles, the appeal to intuitive intellect is not redundant; but it is still indefensible.

### 3. HYPOTHESES IN ETHICS

Aristotle stresses that ethical ends are like hypotheses in not being the result of reasoning or inference. Does he just mean the weak claim, that when we deliberate we assume an end without reasoning or inference on that occasion? If he meant this, an end would be like a "hypothesis for someone," assumed without proof for one occasion but capable of being proved (*APo.* 76b23–34); but he says an end is like an unqualified hypothesis, which is never reached or proved by reasoning or inference. And so if the analogy is not totally misleading, Aristotle means that ultimate practical ends are never reached by deliberation or reasoning. He is justified in saying that two different faculties (*dunamis*) are concerned with ends and with means, and that ends are no concern of reason (*EE* 1227b39–1228a2), only if the analogy is understood this way.

However, he hardly means that the ends really are just hypotheses grasped by intuitive intellect; if they were, they would be first principles of demonstration, and ethics would be a demonstrative science. But it is not a demonstrative science. The analogue to intuitive intellect is desire which begins deliberation and results in decision (*prohairesis*).

Observation and dialectic prepare us to grasp first principles of theoretical sciences by intuitive intellect, though they do not justify us in grasping them *as* first principles, by Aristotle's standards of non-conventional priority. What prepares us for the grasp of practical first principles? Various options are open for Aristotle:

- (1) They are never acquired at all, since everyone has the same goals by nature (perhaps suggested by *MM* 1190a2–5).
- (2) People have different goals fixed by nature.<sup>6</sup>
- (3) We do not have goals fixed by nature, but somehow acquire the goals we have.

Aristotle endorses the third option. Virtue of character makes our ends right (*EE* 1228a1–3); and since virtue can be acquired, ends can be acquired. If we all had the same ends, the virtuous and the vicious man would not have different ends; but Aristotle thinks they do. If we had different fixed ends, we could not acquire good ends by acquiring virtues. And so we will know how we acquire ends if we know how we become virtuous.

Aristotle's answers seem to support and clarify the analogy between ends and hypotheses. Virtues of character are acquired by habituation — training in doing virtuous actions and taking pleasure in them (1104a23–b16, 1220a34–8, 1221b27–1222a5).<sup>7</sup> These virtues belong to the non-rational part of the soul (1103a3–18, 1138b35–1139a3, 1220a10–13, 1221b27–39; see, *MM* 1185b–13), while the deliberative virtue of wisdom (*phronēsis*) belongs to the rational part, and is concerned with means to ends (1227b40–1228a1, if this refers to wisdom; 1144a7–9, 1145a4–6).

This sketch of habituation and its results shows how first principles are acquired, and how they are like hypotheses. The ends we pursue are acquired by habituation in pleasure and pain, and once acquired are not subject to practical reasoning, which has no concern with ends. What someone can be rationally convinced to do will depend on the ends he has acquired in his upbringing; he cannot be rationally convinced to change his ends, since there is no rational practical argument about ends.

But ethical ends are unlike scientific hypotheses, since they are not scientific and are not grasped by intuitive intellect.<sup>8</sup> There was a gap between the results of observational induction or dialectic and grasping by intuitive intellect; but there is no such gap between the results of habituation and the grasp of practical goals. Someone who has finished induction or dialectic does not have a first principle of demonstrative science until he has done something more, certified and grasped it by intuitive intellect; but someone who has been habituated does have the right grasp of ends to begin deliberation. Practical first principles do not claim to be necessary truths or first principles of a science, but to guide action; and so they need not and cannot be grasped by intuitive intellect. To reach theoretical first principles we must examine observations and common beliefs carefully, and certify our conclusion by intuitive intellect; but to reach a practical goal we need to be habituated in ways of feeling pleasure and pain.

This doctrine about practical first principles should make Aristotle wonder how a practical end can be shown to be the right one, or how someone can claim to have a true conception of what it is best to do. It is not clear how someone could argue for such a claim, since practical reason is apparently limited to means, and so cannot deal with this question about ends. We must apparently say that our ends are those normally recognized as the right ones (see 1143b11–14), and perhaps we can add that someone who does not accept them is not fit to do ethics at all (see, 1095b4–13, if that is what it means). When Aristotle requires a good upbringing for a student of ethics (1095a2–12, 1179b23–31; see, *MM* 1206b17–29), he appears to accept this limitation on the powers of ethical reasoning.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. DELIBERATION

However, Aristotle's views on practical reason also challenge the analogy with hypotheses. Sometimes apparent evidence for the restrictive view of reasoning just sketched can be understood differently. Sometimes he is inconsistent.

1. The comments in *EN* III do not by themselves commit him to the restrictive view. As we saw earlier, they may mean only that in any deliberation some end is assumed without deliberation. Nor should we hastily identify "contributors to the end" or "things towards the end" (*ta pros to telos*) with means to the end; contributors may include components of the end as well as instrumental means to it, and deliberation may specify an unspecific end as well as find instrumental means to an end which must already be specified.<sup>10</sup>

2. The wider view of deliberation raises questions about "wish" or "will" (*boulēsis*). We might easily suppose that no wish is reached by deliberation; and sometimes Aristotle seems to think a wish is any desire not focussed on a particular situation; either deliberation finds ways to achieve its end and so issues in a desire focussed on a particular situation, or it is left unfocussed if it cannot be fulfilled (1111b19–26, 1225b32–8). But when Aristotle says that animals have emotion (*thumos*) and appetite (*epithumia*), but no decision (*prohairesis*), he implicitly denies that they have wish either (1111b12–13, 1225b26–8). An incontinent man acts when his deliberation has transformed an unfocussed desire into a desire for something he can achieve (1142b17–20), and so appears to act on a decision; but Aristotle denies this (1111b13–15), presumably because he does not act on wish, which is necessary for decision.<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere he says that wish is desire for the good (*Rhet.* 1392b21, *Top.* 146b5–6, 37), while appetite is desire for the pleasant (*EE* 1223a34, *DA* 414b5–6), and the *EN* implies this contrast.<sup>12</sup> To show why animals lack this desire for the good and have only appetite for the pleasant Aristotle must appeal to another central feature of wish; it is a

rational desire, belonging to the rational part of the soul (*DA* 432b6, *Top.* 126a13; cf. *Rhet.* 1369a4, *EE* 1223a27–8).<sup>13</sup> Animals lack deliberation and practical reason (*DA* 434a5–11), and so lack wish, since a conception of one's own good depends on reason (*Pol.* 1253a9–17).<sup>14</sup> This other evidence suggests what the *EN* does not plainly say, that wish must itself be the result of deliberation about one's overall good. If Aristotle does not mean this, he cannot distinguish wish from other desires as he wants to.

3. This conception of desire and deliberation explains Aristotle's views about wisdom and virtue. Wisdom is a deliberative virtue (1140a24–31, 1141b8–10), but it also achieves a true grasp of the end (1142b31–3).<sup>15</sup> This should not be surprising. For wisdom deliberates about "what sorts of things are towards living well in general," not about what is towards health or strength, or any other particular specified good (1140a27–8). This contrast suggests that the wise man deliberates about the components of the end of living well or happiness, not just about instrumental means. He deliberates not about production, which has its end outside it, but about activity, where good activity is itself the end (1140b4–7). The wise man might do this if he had some fairly definite initial view of components of the end, and just had to decide what actions counted as achieving these components (for example, if I want to go out for entertainment this evening and decide to go to this concert, I have decided what counts as achieving my end). But if the wise man had only to make these relatively easy decisions, he would not have a different conception of the end from other people's because of his wisdom. Probably Aristotle means that he must also form his general view of the components of happiness, not take it for granted.

4. Aristotle has good reason to think wisdom is necessary for complete virtue. The virtuous man must decide on virtuous action as a good in itself (1105a28–33, 1144a13–20); decision requires deliberation; and so the virtuous man's decision rests on the wise man's deliberation about what actions are good in themselves, and so admirable (1115b11–13), 1117b7–15, 1120a11–13, 23–9, 1122b5–6 etc.).<sup>16</sup> Virtue and wisdom require each other, since a man cannot be wise without virtue, and cannot grasp the right end, which is the task of virtue, unless he has specified it and found its components by deliberative wisdom.<sup>17</sup>

Study of Aristotle's views on practical reason and wisdom makes practical first principles look much less like hypotheses than they seemed at first. For now we cannot say that ends are grasped by wish without any deliberation, or that deliberation is concerned only with instrumental means, not with finding ends, or that habituation in pleasure and pain produces the virtuous man's conception of the end. For his conception of the end depends on the wise man's deliberation about its components. Deliberation is apparently competent to consider both means and ends, and Aristotle was wrong to suggest that two distinct faculties are needed.

## 5. DIALECTIC AND DELIBERATION

We noticed that dialectic is a road towards first principles of theoretical sciences. Aristotle also thinks it is a road towards practical first principles. He announces his inquiry in the *Ethics* as a road towards first principles (*archai*), from the "that" to the "why," and from what is more known to us to what is more known by nature (1095a28–b8, 1216b26–40).<sup>18</sup> This is his normal conception of dialectical method (*APo.* 84b19–24, *Phys.* 184a16–23, *Met.* 1029b3–12, *Top.* 141b15–22), which examines the common beliefs as a way to first principles (*Top.* 101a36–b4).<sup>19</sup> Later Aristotle claims to have found a first principle from common beliefs, and defends it from other common beliefs (1098a20–b12).

Dialectic seems to challenge the claim of habituated virtue to grasp ethical first principles. For now the moral beliefs of the ordinary moral agents seem to be the "that" rather than the "why," the place we start our inquiry rather than the basic ethical principles; the principles will be found by the dialectician, not by the ordinary virtuous person. If we think first principles are found by the wise man's deliberation, dialectic seems to be a rival to that as well, since it also claims to find first principles. Aristotle seems to recognize three incompatible ways to first principles; habituated virtue without wisdom, virtue including wisdom, and dialectic.

We might try to remove the appearance of conflict by suggesting that the "first principles" in these three cases are different. Perhaps the moral agent's first principles are the ultimate goals of action, discovered by habituated virtue or by deliberation, while the dialectician's first principles are principles of a moral theory rather than ends for action.<sup>20</sup> On this view Aristotle distinguishes the concerns of a moral agent and a moral philosopher in a fairly familiar way; and surely we must assume some such distinction to avoid ascribing to him the absurd belief that the fully virtuous person must have a correct theory about what he does?

But this is not Aristotle's view of his *Ethics*. He treats it as a part of political science (*politikē*; see, 1094b11, 1095a2, 1102a12); the concerns, methods and limitations of political science are shared by the *Ethics* (see, 1094b11–1095a13 with 1095a28–b9, 1102b26–1104a1). Now political science is the same state (*hexis*) of a man as wisdom (1141b23–33), and wisdom is deliberative; therefore political science is deliberative.<sup>21</sup> Though dialectic and deliberation do not always coincide, Aristotle treats the dialectical argument in the *Ethics* as part of the deliberation of political science.

Aristotle's view of political science and dialectic shows that he does not mean dialectic and deliberation to be concerned with different kinds of first principles. Since they are both deliberative, they are both concerned with ends for action; they are not rival methods, but the same method. We have dissolved one apparent conflict in Aristotle's views about the source of first principles. But we have not reconciled the claims of habituated virtue and of deliberation, including dialectic, to find first principles.

Now how does dialectic contribute to the task of reaching first principles, or show that this is a task for deliberation? We might say that deliberative wisdom does not really decide on ultimate ends; it takes an ultimate end for granted, happiness, and just considers ways to achieve it. Does this procedure not imply serious limits on deliberation?

Nothing very specific is taken for granted. Wisdom would not determine a conception of the ultimate end if it simply took for granted some fairly specific description of happiness (for example, as composed of wealth, or honour, or contemplation, or some compound of them), and identified the states which realize this description (for example, making thirty thousand a year, having a peerage, reading philosophy). But the wise man does not agree with others on some specific description of the components of happiness; he must find this description of happiness himself before he can begin the easier task of finding the actions which realize these components.

But even so must the wise man not assume happiness as the ultimate end? The *EN* does not assume this.<sup>22</sup> It begins, not with happiness, but with 'the good for man' or 'the ultimate good' (1094b6, 1095a16). Though most people identify the ultimate good with happiness (1095a14–20), Aristotle does not merely assume the identity, but argues for it (1097a15–b21). Now what is assumed if the good for man is the basic assumption? Aristotle may imply that if we do not pursue a final good, desire is empty and pointless (1094a18–22).<sup>23</sup> But it is not clear if he thinks that everyone in fact pursues a final good, or that some people's desire is indeed empty and pointless

because they do not pursue it.<sup>24</sup> Aristotle can fairly assume at least that someone does not want his desires to be empty and pointless; a proof that the pursuit of a final good is the only reasonable alternative to having empty and pointless desires gives us good reason to pursue a final good.

Aristotle does not say much to justify his claim. Why could we not pursue several ends for their own sake, without pursuing any one of them as *the* final good or *the* ultimate end? But Aristotle need not insist that some one of our normal ends is more ultimate than the others (for example, being a good citizen rather than swimming or enjoying music); the sum of these ends is an ultimate end for us. Pursuit of several ends does not refute the claim that we pursue one ultimate end. But if the ultimate end is merely a sum of ordinary ends, does it matter? If we say that we want some ultimate end which consists of our ends  $a+b+c$ , is that simply to say that we want  $a$  and  $b$  and  $c$ ? Why is it, as Aristotle suggests, any help to us to know what the ultimate end is (1094a22–4), since we will just know all over again that we want  $a+b+c$ ?

Aristotle answers that the science concerned with the ultimate end will be political science, which is the most architectonic science, because it prescribes how far the various crafts and other sciences and activities should be pursued so that its end will include the ends of all the other sciences and pursuits and will be the good for man (1094a24–b7).<sup>25</sup> Political science is needed not only to use the products of the productive sciences, but also (1094b5–6) to regulate activities which may be pursued for their own sake. Though someone who pursues  $a$  and  $b$  and  $c$  for their own sake may say that his ultimate end is simply  $a+b+c$ , he will not (Aristotle supposes) simply want some of each; he will also want the right combination of them, so that none of them is disproportionate in his life. The ultimate end will be the *best* combination of ends, both difficult and useful to find; that is why we need political science. Some obvious candidates for happiness fail our conditions (*EN* I 5) because they offer us only some of the ends recognized as worthwhile. Aristotle thinks his conception of the final good does better.

Though the later parts of the argument deserve consideration too, we can already see how practical reasoning and wisdom need not rely on unargued hypotheses, and how dialectical argument is part of practical reasoning. Aristotle does not demand that his reader should agree with his conception of happiness, or should think happiness is the ultimate end, or that he pursues an ultimate end. Aristotle argues, though sometimes too briefly, for all these claims in the *EN*. His argument is part of political science, the architectonic science concerned with the ultimate end (1094a26–7, 1141b22–3, 1152b1–3), which Aristotle identifies with deliberative wisdom. The argument is deliberative, since it depends on some end; it has no force against someone who has no aims, or does not care at all about their order or proportion. But that is only to say that it is addressed to rational agents. It does not presuppose any firm conception of an ultimate end beyond deliberation. We have seen that Aristotle's theory of deliberation requires no such conception of the end; and so there is no reason to deny that the argument of the *EN* is deliberative as well as dialectical.

If this is true, then Aristotle aims to argue deliberatively for a choice of ends. Whether or not his arguments succeed is another question. But if this is his aim, he can quite consistently say that the moral agent's wisdom and the dialectician's theory reach the first principles of choice and action; for the theory is simply the more abstract part of wisdom. But now he has less reason than ever to say that ends are analogous to hypotheses, beyond deliberation and reached by some non-deliberative process of training desires. The conflict in Aristotle's views is not to be explained away.



## 6. EXPLANATION OF THE CONFLICTS

However, Aristotle's acceptance of the analogy with hypotheses is not simply a mistake; he has good reasons for being attracted to it because of doubts about the scope of deliberation and dialectic. We have seen how these doubts might arise:

(1) If deliberation always takes some end for granted, surely it will only be relevant to someone who already accepts the end. How then can it justify a choice of ends?

(2) If dialectic begins from common beliefs, and relies on them in its arguments, surely its conclusions will tell us about what is commonly believed rather than about what is true? How then can it show that a moral position is correct, not just generally accepted?

The doubt about deliberation leads Aristotle to say that ends must be grasped by non-deliberative desire. The doubt about dialectic leads him, in theoretical sciences, to demand first principles resting on intuitive intellect rather than dialectic. Since ethics cannot be made into a theoretical science with necessarily true premises, Aristotle does not demand intuitive intellect here; but he might infer that dialectical argument should be addressed only to those brought up to accept the common beliefs which he assumes. Dialectic will be useful for exposing and removing inconsistencies in ordinary beliefs and adjusting the less general to the more general (cf. 1145b6-7, 1146b7-8), but it will not prove anything about the truth. These worries about deliberation and dialectic raise general questions about the powers of moral theory. Does Aristotle's theory or practice of practical reasoning answer them?

The doubt about deliberation is less serious if we explained correctly how deliberation presupposes ends. The most abstract deliberation about happiness does not presuppose the pursuit of any particular end, but only that we pursue some ends in the way a rational agent pursues them. To assume this much is not to restrict the powers of deliberation in ethical argument. Someone who was not a rational end-pursuing agent would be capable of neither happiness nor virtue, and ethical argument with him would be out of place.

The doubt about dialectic is harder to remove. Though Aristotle seeks a solution that makes sense of the common beliefs, he assumes that this solution will be true (*EN* 1098b9-12, *EE* 1215a7-8, *Phys.* 211a7-11).<sup>26</sup> He treats universal consent as one criterion of truth (1172b35-1173a3). But he cannot expect universal consent to all the beliefs he relies on in his ethical theory; presumably the intemperate man will not accept common views of what is worthwhile, and especially will deny that the commonly-recognized virtues are worthwhile. Aristotle might reply that the best we can do in ethics is to achieve mutual adjustment between common beliefs and our theory; that is the truth, or as near to it as we can come, and we cannot argue against a radical critic. Or he might agree that after all we do need some intuition about first principles, which we unfortunately cannot achieve in ethics.<sup>27</sup>

But Aristotle might argue that the general objections to dialectical arguments do not affect his arguments. Doubts about the strength of dialectical conclusions are reasonable if the premises are *merely* common beliefs which most people accept but someone might reasonably doubt. If Aristotle can show that his premises are a subset of common beliefs which cannot reasonably be doubted, he can protect his conclusions against this doubt. Now the previous argument for recognizing a final good meets this condition; Aristotle begins by assuming only that the reader is a rational agent who wants his desires not to be empty and pointless. If the rest of the argument follows

from equally firm premises, it will not interest only someone who accepts common beliefs about the virtues. It will interest any rational agent, since he will not deny the basic assumptions about rational agents demanded by Aristotle.

Does the argument in the *EN* meet these conditions? Only a thorough study could decide. But it is suggestive that sometimes he appeals to premises which are more than common beliefs, to justify some crucial steps in the argument. His own view of happiness and the good for man relies on an account of life and the soul in general, and of the human soul, life and characteristic activity (*ergon*) in particular, which shows that the best life will be a life according to some excellence guided by reason (1098a3–5).<sup>28</sup> This conclusion, with the associated account of the soul in I 13, is used to find excellences of character (1106a14–24; *EE* 1218b37–1219a1); these are the right combinations of rational and non-rational elements which produce a life guided by reason achieving happiness. This general requirement for a virtue should be satisfied by the virtues Aristotle recognizes; and he tries to show this in the account of courage, temperance and so on. Especially he argues that basic features of human nature require the concern for others expressed in friendship, and therefore in justice (1097b8–11, 1157b19–24, 1169b16–22). Reflections on the basic desires of human beings will show why benefactors love those they have benefited more than they are loved in return (1167b28–1168a15), and especially why a virtuous man will want to share his virtuous actions with a virtuous friend (1170a13–b19). The account of pleasure is derived from Aristotle's general account of processes and realizations (1174a13–b14); and the earlier "function argument" is invoked again to show that the virtuous life is the pleasantest (1176a3–29). The arguments for these central ethical doctrines are not entirely separate from common beliefs. Nor do they rest solely on these beliefs. Aristotle looks for premises acceptable to a rational agent with no prejudice in favour of the recognized virtues, and argues that a vicious life will be intolerable for someone seeking the best life for a rational agent (1166b2–29, 1168b15–28). Though his argument is dialectical, it is more than merely dialectical.<sup>29</sup>

While this bald summary conceals some of the most difficult questions about Aristotle's arguments, it suggests at least that he does not simply try to reduce the common beliefs to consistency, or to persuade only someone who already accepts them. He means to justify his conception of the virtues and happiness, and the common beliefs embodied in it, to a rational agent who need not already accept it.

Elsewhere too Aristotle defends dialectical argument against the objection that it cannot reach the truth. He argues dialectically for his metaphysical first principles (for example the Principle of Non-Contradiction) from an indispensable starting-point — that the opponent says something and agrees that he signifies something by it (*Met.* 1006a11–22). The opponent cannot reject the starting-point without disqualifying himself from speaking significantly and hence from being an opponent in an argument. This is the right kind of premise for a dialectical defence of first principles. The premises of the *Ethics* are not indispensable in just the same way; but Aristotle might reasonably claim that they are indispensable for a rational agent, the sort of person who is the proper concern of ethics. Careful choice of premises shows how dialectic can justify first principles, not merely make them more plausible from ordinary beliefs.

If Aristotle believes that dialectical reasoning justifies his conception of the virtues, and not only to those who already accept common beliefs about them, why does he require his students to have been well brought up? His requirements are not quite clear, and he does not defend them clearly. Twice he demands a good upbringing, so that the student will already want to do recognized virtuous actions (1095b4–6,

1179b23–31).<sup>30</sup> But elsewhere he demands only the capacity to control affections (1095a2–11); self-controlled people might not have been trained in recognized virtuous actions. Aristotle might have various reasons for these demands:

(1) The student must be aware of those common beliefs about the virtues which are the material of Aristotle's argument — though for this purpose he need not accept them.

(2) He must have some self-control; otherwise he may be persuaded by rational argument against his non-rational desires and affections (*Pol.* 1332b6–8), but be unable to act on his new convictions.

(3) If he is too attached to non-virtuous ways, he may not be able to change his ingrained non-rational desires even though he is self-controlled. If he is persuaded by Aristotle's arguments, he may become continent, but not virtuous.

(4) If he is too attached to vice, he may be unwilling to listen to reason, and may not be persuaded by an argument it would be rational for him to accept.

These reasons show why someone who is to benefit and become virtuous from ethical theory should have been well brought up. Aristotle does not imply that dialectic cannot rationally justify the Aristotelian virtues to a vicious person. He can quite fairly promise to prove that a vicious man has good reason to change his way of life without promising that the vicious man will accept the proof; vice causes prejudice as well as weak will. And so the prerequisites for the study of ethics are perfectly consistent with the role we have found for dialectic and deliberation.

We have considered Aristotle's practice in the *EN* more than his few explicit remarks about method. He never says that he chooses his dialectical premises in the way we have suggested. But his practice suggests very strongly that he should reject the analogy between practical ends and hypotheses. Deliberation and dialectic can justify ethical first principles, without non-deliberative support. The analogy with hypotheses is a good one, in so far as it illuminates a significant parallel between Aristotle's doubts about justification of first principles in theoretical sciences and in ethics. But his own view of deliberation in ethics and of dialectic in ethics and elsewhere shows how to remove these doubts. In ethics the powers of deliberation and dialectic reinforce each other, since ethical dialectic is just a part of deliberation, and moral theory is a part of what makes a moral agent a virtuous man. It follows that only someone who accepts the correct moral theory is the fully virtuous man. There is no reason to suppose that Aristotle would find this an intolerable paradox; he insists that the point of moral theory is to become good (1103b26–9), and suggests no other way to become good. The view of deliberation and dialectic extends the scope of moral reasoning beyond the limits implied by the analogy with hypotheses; since Aristotle ought to welcome this extension, he ought to reject the analogy with hypotheses. And so, while the analogy fairly presents one of Aristotle's major doubts, it does not fairly present his best views about practical reason.

## 7. DEVELOPMENTS IN ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE?

If we think Aristotle's best views conflict with the hypothesis analogy, and that he ought to reject it, we may wonder whether he saw this, and wrote the more generous account of deliberation later than the restrictive account. Since the clearest statement of the restrictive account and of the hypothesis-analogy is in the *EE*, we may wonder whether the two ethical works differ overall in their view of deliberation and practical

reason. Tidy or conclusive answers are hard to find. Another passage on hypotheses occurs in a book common to both *Ethics*, *EN VII*; and the account of wisdom and deliberation is mostly drawn from another common book, *EN VI*.<sup>31</sup> Many of the dialectical arguments cited from the *EN* have parallels in the *EE*. However, it may be worthwhile to speculate a little further, and to suggest that the *EE* is more firmly and explicitly committed than the *EN* to the restrictive account of deliberation associated with the treatment of ends as hypotheses.

1. First, we have seen that *EN III* conspicuously fails to suggest that some ends are always beyond deliberation, or to exclude deliberation about things "towards" ends which are components of it. But if we try to interpret the parallel passages in the *EE* as generously, we are prevented by the points without parallel in the *EN* — ends are hypotheses, beyond deliberation; a faculty separate from reason grasps the end, and reason grasps what is towards it. *EN III* easily allows the broad account of deliberation; but *EE II* avoids exactly those ambiguities which allow it.

2. The topic of *EE II.11*, whether virtue makes the end or the reason right, is examined also in *EN VI.12–13*, but not in the initial account of deliberation in *EN III*. The silence of *III* means that the *EN* does not discuss the question until the account of wisdom is presented; the virtue considered in *VI.12–13* is the virtue which someone possesses if and only if he possesses wisdom (1144b14–17, 1145a1–2). The *EE*, on the contrary, does not explicitly mention wisdom, though that is probably the rational "other faculty" (1227b40), and an account of complete virtue is promised (1234a28–30). The difference is important — for the *EE* treats virtue and reason as two separate faculties, and does not face the implications of the full account of virtue which makes virtue include wisdom.

(a) The comment in *EN VI*, that virtue makes the end right and wisdom makes right what is towards the end (1144a7–9, 1145a4–6) might be taken to repeat the *EE* claim that virtue makes the end right, and some other faculty makes right what contributes to it (1127b40–1228a3). The *EE* required distinct faculties because there could be no reasoning about the end (1227b24–6); and the *EN* might be taken to mean the same. But if virtue includes wisdom, the *EE*'s point is obscured; for now the virtuous man will require deliberative wisdom to find the right end, as *EN VI* has argued. If Aristotle explains his doctrine this way, he cannot reasonably maintain that the end is like a hypothesis because there is no reasoning or inference about it; and so it is not surprising that the *EE*'s analogy does not appear in these chapters.

(b) The *EE* contrasts virtue, which grasps the end pursued in a decision, with another faculty concerned with what contributes to the end, which is the faculty forming the decision (1227b37–1228a2); this faculty is reason (1227b34–6), probably wisdom, which is to be discussed later (1218b4–6, 1222b7–9). *EN VI* contrasts virtue, which makes the decision right, with cleverness, which executes the decision (1144a20–2); but it does not draw the *EE*'s contrast. A right decision requires both virtue to grasp the end and wisdom to find what contributes to the end (1145a4–6); and so the virtue which makes the whole decision right will include wisdom. The "other faculty" is not wisdom, but cleverness, a purely executive ability which the wise man needs (1144a22–9). Despite the similar expression, the *EE*'s point is not the *EN*'s here — naturally, since the surrounding view of wisdom and virtue is incompatible with the *EE*'s comment on ends and hypotheses. *EN VI.12–13* as it stands may have been written as part of the *EE*, resuming the discussion of *EE II.11*, and presenting the account of wisdom and complete virtue promised earlier. But even so, the conflict between the two passages, noticed or unnoticed by Aristotle, is still severe. Our ac-

count of the conflict may encourage us to read VI.13 as a later correction of EE II.11, now placed after the discussion of wisdom and not before it, to show what was wrong with the earlier view. But this explanation of the conflict is only speculative; the important thing is to see the conflict.

3. It will be easier to see if this is a conflict within one work or between two works if we find that clearly Eudemian or clearly Nicomachean books accept or reject the analogy between ends and hypotheses. This inquiry raises several tricky questions about the treatment of virtues and the good in the two works. But one less complex issue can be noticed. The EE refers to some comments "at the beginning" to support the view of ends as hypotheses (1127a10–11), probably to the initial claim that everyone who can live by his decision should lay down (*thesthai*) some goal of living admirably, honor or reputation or wealth or culture, by reference to which he will do all his actions, since failure to organize our life towards some end is a sign of much folly (1214b7–12). This advice apparently corresponds to the initial discussion of the final good in the EN; but the EN offers no exact parallel. Someone who read this advice in isolation might suppose he was being asked to stipulate something as his final good, and distinguish its components from the instrumental means to it (1214b12–28), as though this task required only clear understanding of the distinction to reach obviously true results about the character of the final good, without elaborate deliberative labours. Anyhow Aristotle does not seem to think the laying down of the ultimate end and its components results from deliberation, since he cites this passage as evidence for his view that ethical ends are beyond deliberation, like hypotheses. EE I assigns the highest of practical goods to the supreme science, political science, economics and wisdom (1218b12–16); they are to be distinguished later; cf. EN 1141b23–34). But it is not clear what wisdom is supposed to do with its end. It will follow the normal method of teachers who define (*horisamenoi*) the end and show that the things contributing to it are good (1218b16–18); like other sciences, it does not try to prove first principles (1218b22–4).<sup>\*32</sup> The passage is ambiguous, since Aristotle does not explain what is required to "define" the end, whether "prove" refers to demonstrative proof or some other kind of argument, and whether the wise man assumes only that happiness is a good and argues for a particular account of it, or assumes a particular specification of it without argument. But if he believes that wisdom establishes by deliberation the right components of the final good, he should have marked this significant difference from the procedure of a craft, which is his model here and in EE II.11. The comments in EE I do not positively require the account of deliberation in II.10–11; but at least they fit it more easily than they fit the wider role assigned to deliberation in EN VI.

4. EN I, by contrast, emphasizes that the final good is the subject of political science concerned with an end embracing the ends of other sciences (1094a26–b11). We have noticed that though it does not say that political science deliberates about the components of the good, the remarks in this book fit neatly with the account of wisdom and political science in EN VI (1141b22–8). This account is also anticipated in EE I, just before the remark that no science proves the goodness of its end. But Aristotle does not explain here that the supreme science is architectonic, or that its end includes the ends of the subordinate sciences; and so he does not suggest that the wise man will deliberate about components of the good. There is no clear or sharp difference between the two works. But it may not be coincidental that the EE offers some early support for its later claim that ends are beyond inference and reasoning, while the EN includes none of these remarks, and tends to suggest the rather different picture of EN VI. To this extent our account of the discussion of the final good in each work supports our claims

about the two discussions of deliberation; the *EN*, for whatever reason, is unspecific and silent at exactly the points where the *EE* prepares for or defends its view of the non-deliberative status of first principles.

5. Twice the *EE* appeals to the productive crafts at crucial points in the account of practical deliberation (1218b16–24, 1227b28–32) to justify its claim that the end is beyond deliberation. *EN* VI's account of wisdom challenges that appeal, when it insists that the wise man is concerned with activity, where there is no separate end to be assumed, as opposed to production. We might wonder whether, if he saw the importance of the distinction between activity and production, Aristotle would have relied so heavily on arguments from productive to practical reasoning; in the *EN* the appeal to productive crafts for a model is much more limited (1112b12–16). But the earlier books in both works offer little evidence for or against the view that Aristotle recognized the distinction between production and activity. He seems to anticipate it in the first chapter of the *EN*, distinguishing those ends which are "works (*erga*) beyond realizations (*energeiai*)" from those which are realizations alone (1094b3–5); but the same distinction is expressed in different terms in the *EE* (1219a12–18). The distinction itself is not hard to draw; the important point is that the claim that the wise man's deliberation about those realizations or activities which are components of the end is not like the craftsman's deliberation. We have noticed that the *EN* anticipates, or makes room for, this function of wisdom more clearly than the *EE* does. The evidence is too scanty and ambiguous to decide anything.

The account of wisdom in *EN* VI follows more easily on the account of deliberation in *EN* III than on *EE* II; the rest of the two works offer us some, but not at all decisive, further support for this view. But in any case the conflict between Aristotle's views cannot simply be explained chronologically. *EN* VI, common to both *Ethics*, contains the wider account of deliberation, while *EN* VII, another common book, clearly appeals once to the hypothesis-analogy. Whatever we think about the composition of these common books, it is strange that if Aristotle sees the conflict between his two views, he allows the two conflicting views both to stand in these two books. Though the difference between the two *Ethics* justifies some tentative conclusions, it cannot be the main explanation of the conflict.

One further speculation may suggest a connection between this question in the ethical works and Aristotle's wider philosophical concerns. In the *Analytics* Aristotle insists that scientific knowledge requires demonstration from first principles grasped by intuitive intellect, with no further *scientific* defence of the first principles. In *Metaphysics* IV he recognizes a science of being which is non-demonstrative, and *can* defend its own first principles scientifically. In the ethical works, Aristotle comes to see that not all ethical reasoning must rely on an end accepted without reasoning, since there can be deliberation about ends as well as from ends. He realizes in *Metaphysics* IV that not all argument which yields knowledge must conform to the demonstrative model; and the ethical works show that not all rational deliberation must conform to the analogy with the demonstrative model.<sup>\*33</sup> The parallel between the two changes in Aristotle's views is not exact; but it is close enough to be interesting and instructive. He is attracted by the demonstrative structure of a science as a model for ethical deliberation, and recognizes no deliberation which violates the model; but he also realizes the limits of demonstrative science both as a general account of knowledge and as a model for rational deliberation. His different views on the powers of ethical reasoning help to explain both why he should find the model attractive and why he should need to reject it.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> This paper discusses more fully some of the issues treated briefly in my previous paper, "Aristotle on Reason, Desire and Virtue," *Journal of Philosophy* 72(1975):567-78. I often rely on the helpful discussions by Sorabji, Wiggins and Cooper. I have discussed some of the issues about the *Analytics* and *Metaphysics* more fully in, "Aristotle's Discovery of Metaphysics" (unpublished). I am grateful to the Department of Philosophy of the University of Minnesota, and especially to H. E. Mason, for the opportunity to present a version of this paper at a conference in March 1976, and to J. M. Cooper and D. F. Pears for vigorous and helpful objections.

<sup>2</sup> On the interpretation of *hupotheseis* here see, H. H. Joachim, *Aristotle; Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 1951).

<sup>3</sup> *APo* 76b23-34 mentions *hupotheseis pros tina*, which are accepted by a particular learner without demonstration, though capable of being demonstrated. Aristotle's normal hypotheses are those which this passage calls *hupothesis haplōs* (i.e. not merely *pros tina*), neither allowing nor requiring demonstration.

<sup>4</sup> For more detailed accounts of *nous* see, J. Barnes, *Aristotle; Posterior Analytics* (Oxford, 1975); L. A. Kosman, "Explanation, Understanding and Insight in the *Posterior Analytics*," in *Exegesis And Argument*, eds. E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty (Assen, 1973); J. H. Lesher, "The Meaning of *Nous* in the *Posterior Analytics*," *Phronesis* 18(1973):44-68. Their account ascribes a far more reasonable and moderate doctrine to Aristotle than I suggest for him. But I think his objections to merely conventional priority require the view I suggest.

<sup>5</sup> On arguments from appearances see, G. E. L. Owen, "Tithenai ta Phainomena," in *Aristotele et les Problèmes de la Méthode* (Louvain, 1961).

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle seems to reject this second option at *EN* 1114a31-b2, though the conclusion of the following discussion is hard to interpret.

<sup>7</sup> This is an over-simplified account of habituation; see further R. R. K. Sorabji, "Aristotle on the Role of Intellect in Virtue," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 74(1973-4): 127-9, and M. F. Burnyeat, "Aristotle on Learning to be Good," (unpublished). A more careful account might well show that habituation is not complete without *phronesis*; for perhaps only the virtuous man will really take pleasure in doing virtuous action because it is virtuous, as required in 1104b6, *Autō(i) toutō(i) chairōn*. Someone who is not yet virtuous can have a character *stergon to kalon*, 1179b20, and can be cultivated *pros to kalōs chairein kai misein*, b25-26; but this does not mean that he enjoys virtuous action because it is virtuous. In so far as Aristotle thinks habituation yields a conception of ends independent of wisdom and deliberation, he is not facing these consequences of some of his remarks on habituation, if these are the consequences.

<sup>8</sup> The very controversial passage on *nous* at *EN* 1143a35-b5 does not say, but denies that *nous* grasps the ethical first principles which are the basis of deliberation. [Contrast L. H. G. Greenwood, *Aristotle; Nicomachean Ethics* VI (Cambridge, 1909), pp. 69-72; J. A. Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford, 1892).] Aristotle has assigned *nous* only to first principles of demonstration in VI6, and now says that in practical matters *nous* is concerned with the last step, not with the first principles which are the concern of *nous* in theoretical science, 1143a35-b3. But does he perhaps mean that *nous* is the basis of deliberation in another way, that particular intuitive judgments are generalized to become the first principles of deliberation [cf. J. Burnet, *Aristotle; Nicomachean Ethics* (London, 1900)]? This is unlikely; since *nous* is of the minor premise and the particular case (1143b2-3), it must be one of the last stages in deliberation, not the first principle (i.e. the conception of the end; compare 1144a31-4). Since the exercise of *nous* belongs to the *phronimos* who deliberates well, *nous* cannot itself provide the basis of his good deliberation — otherwise there would be a vicious regress. But Aristotle does say that particulars are starting-points of the end, *archai tou hou heneka*, 1143b4. He may mean that they modify the wise man's general principles; initially he believes that rudeness is wrong; when he comes to recognize that this action of ignoring someone is rude, he will have a more precise principle. This function of *nous* makes it a significant part of the wise man's equipment, but not the basis of his deliberation. I have benefited from reading Dahl's paper on *nous*, "Aristotle on Practical Reason and the Ends of Action" (unpublished).

<sup>9</sup> In its context this passage does not clearly affirm a narrow view. The author says, "In general it is not reason (*logos*) as the rest think, but rather the affections (*pathé*) which are the first principle (*arché*) and guide of virtue. For some non-rational impulse to the admirable must first come to be, as in fact it does, and then later reason must be the further voter and decider. This can be seen from children and those who live without reason; for in these the non-rational impulses of the affections towards the admirable come to be without reason earlier; then reason is added later, consents with its vote, and produces admirable actions. But it is not true that if someone receives from reason the first principle leading to what is admirable then the affections agree and follow, but often they oppose it. And so an affection in good condition, rather than reason, seems to be the first principle leading to virtue" (1206b17–29). The author may mean only that, as the *EN* also suggests (see Part 6 below), the good affections are necessary for action, though reason might also produce some tendency to action. But if that is all he means, his charge in the first sentence is exaggerated. I mention this passage since many will agree with Stock [Introduction to *Magna Moralia* and *Eudemian Ethics*, in *Works of Aristotle*, Vol. IX (Oxford, 1915)]; that "here we get the crowning word of Peripatetic Ethics for which we wait in vain in *EN* or even in *EE*" (p. xxi).

<sup>10</sup> On this broad use of "*ta pros to telos*" see e.g. Greenwood, p. 46f, D. R. P. Wiggins, "Deliberation and Practical Reason," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 76(1975–6):29–51; J. M. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), pp. 10–22. At 1111b26–30 Aristotle says that wish is concerned with the *telos* rather than with *ta pros to telos*, which are the concern of decision; we wish to be healthy, but decide on those things through which we will be healthy, and we wish to be happy, but it is unsuitable to say we decide to be, since decision appears to be concerned with what is up to us. Later, in 1112b11–16 he says we deliberate not about the *telé*, but about *ta pros ta telé*; a doctor does not deliberate about whether he will heal, nor an orator about whether he will persuade, nor a politician about whether he will produce a state obeying good laws (*eunomia*), nor any of the others about the end; but laying down the end they consider how and through what it will come about. The contrast drawn here might be interpreted three ways:

1. Achievement of the end is a success; but we can't decide to succeed, or deliberate about succeeding, but only about something which is up to us — trying.

2. In any deliberation some conception of an end must be assumed; an orator's deliberation, in his role as orator, assumes his normal professional goal, but he might also on another occasion deliberate about whether he will try to persuade or whether he will even be an orator, with reference to a more general end.

3. Ends are not open to dispute or deliberation; we acquire them non-deliberatively, and must regard them as fixed points for deliberation.

(1) is possible for both passages, which use success-verbs to describe the object of wish. (2) would be equally good, especially for the second passage. Neither passage implies (3); and in each case there is no reason to restrict "those things through which" the end will be achieved to instrumental means.

It is less clear that (3) can be avoided with the apparently parallel passage in the *EE* and *MM*. *EE* 1226a8–14 corresponds to the first *EN* passage. At 1226b10 Aristotle says, "the end is laid down (*keitai*) for everyone," which may simply correspond to "laying down (*themenoi*) the end" in *EN* 1112b15; but this is explained by the parallel between the wish for the end about which there is no *logos* and the first principles of a science (1227a6–13, 1227b23–32) — which suits (3) much better. *MM* 1190a1–7 goes further, suggesting that everyone agrees about the end, and so no one deliberates about that. This at least suggests (3) more strongly than anything in the *EN* suggested it.

<sup>11</sup> Anscombe rightly insists on the distinction between *prohairesis*, the result of *bouleusis* and a rational desire, *boulésis*, and other choices based on deliberation and non-rational desires.

<sup>12</sup> At 1147a33 the *epithumia* opposed to a *prohairesis* is concerned with the pleasant. 1155b21 distinguishes the good and the pleasant as objects of *philia*. Aristotle's position is not unequivocal; he might appear to claim in *EN* I 1 that all desires pursue some good, and at 1113a34 he says that pleasure is an apparent good. Further inquiry is needed to decide if his position is really consistent. I have not considered the third part of the soul, *thumos*, and its object; cf. 1149a25–b2.



<sup>13</sup> However, *Pol.* 1334b22 is an exception, making *boulēsis* is a non-rational desire. Other questions arise about the relation between the divisions of the soul in the *Pol.* and in other works.

<sup>14</sup> It is not clear whether Aristotle thinks animals lack the capacity to deliberate about what to do to satisfy a present desire (for example, how to get the banana which is just out of reach) or lack the capacity to deliberate about which desires to satisfy and how far, how far one end should be pursued against another etc. (This distinction is marked by H. G. Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *Journal of Philosophy* 68(1971):11). Aristotle may think animals lack both deliberative capacities. But it is the lack of the second capacity which implies the lack of *boulēsis* and *prohairesis*.

<sup>15</sup> 1142b32-3 says "good deliberation will be correctness about what is expedient towards the end of which wisdom is the true apprehension." I take "the end" rather than "what is expedient . . ." to be the antecedent of "of which." See R. A. Gauthier and J. Y. Jolif, *Aristote; L'Ethique à Nicomaque* (Louvain and Paris, 1970), 2nd edition; Cooper, p. 64n, against Burnet ad loc. Greenwood, pp. 65-72, is hesitant.

<sup>16</sup> 1117a5 says that courage requires *prohairesis* and *to hou heneka*; presumably the *hou heneka* will come from *prohairesis* — Aristotle does not say where else it might come from. Now the *hou heneka* or *telos* of virtue is *to kalon*, 1115b15. And so the selection of something as *to kalon* will be the result of *prohairesis*, hence of deliberation. Aristotle implies as much when he says that the virtuous man must *prohairesisthai* virtuous action for its own sake, 1105a32. The right pursuit of *to kalon*, then, is the result of wisdom and deliberation.

<sup>17</sup> Four passages consider the relation of wisdom and virtue to ends and means (cf. Sorabji, p. 121f).

1. 1144a7-9; virtue of character makes the goal right and wisdom makes right what contributes to the goal. The question is whether or not virtue of character excludes wisdom. 1144b15-17, on two divisions of *to ēthikon*, implies that it does not. If wisdom is needed to find the right components of the end, and virtue cannot make the goal right without recognizing the right components of it, then virtue's grasp of the goal follows, and does not precede, the operation of wisdom.

2. 1144a20-2; virtue makes the decision right, and some other capacity besides virtue is needed to do what is necessary for the sake of the decision. Does this passage draw the same contrast as 114a7-9 drew, so that the "other capacity" is wisdom? Aristotle should not mean this: for a right decision should require both the right and the right "means" (instrumental or constitutive); these are the aspects contributed by virtue and by wisdom; and so the virtue which makes the decision right should include wisdom; and the "other capacity" should not be wisdom, but something else. And indeed it is something else; for Aristotle now mentions the other capacity, cleverness (1144a22-9), a purely executive (not deliberative) talent for doing what has been decided on. The contrast here is not between virtue and wisdom, but between virtue (including wisdom) and cleverness.

3. 1145a3-6; the right decision requires both wisdom and virtue; for the one makes us pursue the end, and the other what contributes to the end. "The one" and "the other" here should refer respectively to virtue and to wisdom (in chiasmus with the previous clause), if we look back to our first passage, and the doctrine will then be the same.

4. 1178b16-19; "wisdom too is yoked together with virtue of character, and it with wisdom, since the first principles of wisdom are according to the virtues, and the right in virtues of character is according to wisdom." This might mean either (a) virtue of character without wisdom gives the right end and first principles to wisdom, while wisdom is needed to calculate means, and thereby produce the right decisions and actions; or (b) virtue of character including wisdom (as in VI.13) makes the right first principles, and their rightness depends on the work of wisdom. (a) implies and (b) denies, that there is some virtue of character which can have the right conception of the end without wisdom. (b) certainly implies the inter-dependence of virtue and wisdom; and "yoked together" may be taken to suggest this rather than (a). But the passage itself compels neither reading.

<sup>18</sup> The passages on method in *EN* I are not easy to understand. It is most important to distin-

guish the two kinds of *archai* Aristotle mentions here, which are (a) the starting-points for moral inquiry, and (b) the first principles which result from moral inquiry.

1. At 1095a30 Aristotle distinguishes arguments to and arguments from *archai*. In *APo* 84b23–4 the road to the *archai* is the road to first principles; and this should be the road Aristotle considers here; he says we must start (*arkteon*) from what is known to us; and to do that we need a good moral training, “for the *arche* is the that, and if it appears sufficiently, he will not need the why as well; such a man has or might easily acquire *archai*.” What are the *archai* here? Two interpretations of the passage are possible:

(a) This is the road from first principles. Our first principles are what is known to us, or moral beliefs acquired by training, and we reason from them but do not try to justify them further. On this view, *archai* are taken to be the first principles throughout the passage.

(b) This is the road from first principles; it begins from starting-points better-known to us, moving to first principles better-known by nature. The starting-points known to us are the that, particular beliefs about morals, and we do not at the outset need the why as well; a well-brought up person already has, or can easily get, the that. Of these two views (b) fits the passage better — we would not expect Aristotle to say that the *archai* we are looking for from our theory are those which at the start are better known to us, but those which are better known by nature (cf. *Phys.* 184a16–23). The *EN* is a search for *archai* (= first principles), assuming *archai* (= starting-points), but not assuming first principles. For this interpretation see Joachim ad loc. and Ross’s translation, which says “will not at the start need the reason as well” — the italicized words are added to the Greek. Contrast Burnet and Gauthier ad loc.

2. At 1098a26 Aristotle repeats his previous remark that we must expect the degree of exactness suitable to this subject-matter, and says “We must not seek an explanation (*aitia*) either in all cases in the same way, but in some it is enough for the that to be shown clearly, about *archai*, for instance; and the that is first and *arche*. Some *archai* are viewed by induction, some by perception, some by a kind of habituation, and others in other ways.” The context here (Gauthier gives no good reason for relocating the passage elsewhere) is a discussion of first principles, and it would be reasonable for Aristotle to say that we cannot ask for a further why when we come to a first principle, since it is the why and the explanation with no further explanation of it. And so the remark about *archai* here should apply to first principles. However, the passage is equally true (for Aristotle) if the *archai* are starting-points; and he may intend it as a general remark about *archai*, including both starting-points and first principles; in that case it does not say only what 1095a30ff said, since that passage seemed to be confined to starting-points. The final comment about ways *archai* are viewed may suggest that the previous sentence was a general remark on both kinds of *archai*; for the first principles are what we grasp by induction, while it is much easier to see how starting-points are grasped by perception than to see how first principles are. Now if the first example here is about first principles, and the second about starting-points, it is hard to decide about the third; does Aristotle mean that ethical starting-points (as in 1095a30ff) or that ethical first principles (as in 1151a17) are grasped by habituation? This passage does not decide. Even if Aristotle refers to first principles, it is not clear whether “habituation” is supposed to exclude or include the reasoning of the wise man; 1151a17 is more explicit on this point.

It is simplest to take the passage as a general remark about *archai*, including both first principles and starting-points, though in the context the reference to first principles is the relevant one. Neither of these passages in *EN* I implies that first principles are grasped by habituation without the reasoning of the wise man.

<sup>19</sup> *Top.* 101b3 says that dialectic has a way towards *archai* because it is *exetastikē*; and the *Ethics* promise to *exetazein*, *EN* 1095a28, *EE* 1215a6, within the limits prescribed by the *Top.* (with 1095a28–30 cf. *Top.* 104b22–4, 170b5–8). (The reference to dialectical method prompts Aristotle to continue with his discussion of *archai* in 1095a30 ff; here is one reason why Gauthier is wrong to transfer 1095a30 ff to go after 1095b13). *Top.* 101a33 says that in dialectical encounters with the many we should *metabibazein* their mistaken beliefs (cf. 161a33); and *EE* 1216b30 promises to do this [cf. Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles; Eudemische Ethik*, (Berlin, 1962).] The correspondence between the account of the dialectical method in the *Top.* and its practice in the *Ethics* is close.

<sup>20</sup> The end of deliberation is called to *telos* and to *hou heneka* (e.g. 1227b37, 1111b26), never to *dihoti*. Dialectic is said to seek to *dia ti*, 1216b38, and never said to seek to *hou heneka* or to *telos*. Both dialectic and deliberation are said to seek *archai* (1095a31; cf. 1144a32). I see no significant general difference between the *archai* they seek. The good for man in *EN* I 2 is a *telos*, but to find what it is is the task of *politikē*, undertaken in the dialectical argument of *EN* I; this can equally be called deliberation about what is towards the *telos*, since *politikē* is a deliberative science.

Cooper, pp. 59–71, argues for a sharp distinction between dialectical and deliberative method, appealing to the end-directed character of deliberation. Now it is true that dialectic in the *Ethics* may extend beyond what a deliberating agent needs (perhaps, e.g., in the criticism of the Platonic Form of the Good), and that an agent requires familiarity with particular situations which he will not reach by dialectical argument. But I am skeptical about Cooper's attempt at a sharp distinction.

Cooper notes, p. 71n, that the *EN* is a contribution to political science, but he denies that moral philosophy deliberates about how to live. This claim is inconsistent with Aristotle's view that political science is deliberative. Burnet also tries to avoid conflict between the claims of dialectic and habituated virtue; "The man who has been trained in good habits has the *arche* implicitly, and it can be made explicit by a dialectical process" (ad 1095b4). This claim is much weaker than the claim Aristotle makes here and elsewhere for dialectic as a road towards *archai*, not merely towards explicit grasp of *archai* we already grasp implicitly.

<sup>21</sup> In *esti de hē politikē kai hē phronēsis hē autē men hexis, to mentoi einai ou tauton autois*, Aristotle does not mean that "*phronēsis*" is the name of only one branch of the *hexis* of which *politikē* is another part; for he recognizes that we call politicians *phronimoi* 1140b7–11, and rejects the view that the only real *phronimos* is concerned with himself alone and avoids political questions, 1141b33–1142a10. See Greenwood, p. 62f, and Gauthier ad loc. Here Aristotle distinguishes the branch of *politike* concerned with particular *psēphismata*, calling it *praktikē kai bouleutikē*, in contrast to the *architektonikē phronēsis* which is *nomothetikē*; for it is more concerned, as Aristotle sometimes says deliberation should be, with particular actions. But he also believes that *phronēsis* as a whole is *praktikē* and *bouleutikē*, since it is concerned with action, though not always with what is to be done here and now.

<sup>22</sup> The *EE*, however, takes *eudaimonia* as the ultimate end, without further justification or argument, 1214a7.

<sup>23</sup> For recent views on this passage see Cooper, p. 93, Ackrill, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 60 (1974):14f. It is not clear whether Aristotle thinks that pursuit of a final good is (a) sufficient, or (b) also necessary, for us not to pursue one thing always for the sake of another so that desire is empty and pointless. The two accounts of the argument leave him with questions to answer. If he means (a), he must show why pursuit of a final good is preferable to all other ways of avoiding empty and vain desire. If he means (b), his argument is valid only if pursuing *a* and *b* and *c* for themselves counts as pursuing the end (*a + b + c*) for its own sake. Then we must ask what follows from pursuing an ultimate end in this sense. Answers to both questions require Aristotle to describe the structure of the final good, in the way I consider next.

<sup>24</sup> *EE* 1214b7–12 (see Cooper, p. 94) seems to admit that someone can be foolish enough to fail to set up some *skopos tou kalōs zen* (either "goal for living admirably to aim at" or "goal consisting in living admirably"). But this failure seems to involve some fairly definite goal — honour, glory, wealth and culture are Aristotle's examples. The ultimate end considered in the *EN* is rather more schematic and general; and so the *EE* passage does not prove that in the *EN* Aristotle will concede that some people fail to pursue an ultimate good. (Here I am indebted to a remark of J. L. Ackrill.)

<sup>25</sup> Bywater may not be right to bracket *praktikais* in 1094b4. If it is retained, Aristotle explicitly marks the concern of political science for *praxis*, action valued for itself (cf. 1094a4–5, 16–17, 1140b6–7). This concern is suggested anyhow by the further task of political science, *nomothetousēs ti dei prattein kai tinōn apechesthai*, which includes the regulation of *praxis* as well as *poiēsis*.

<sup>26</sup> At 1098b9 Aristotle says we should examine happiness from *ta legomena*, because all *ta huparchonta* agreed with what is true, and what is true soon disagrees with what is false. *Ta legomena* are the common beliefs about happiness, not necessarily all true or all false; *ta huparchonta* in Aristotle are usually the things which are the case, or the facts, taken to be true, as in *GC* 316a10, *APo* 81b23, *Phys.* 208a34 — hence the transition in the last clause from *ta huparchonta* to what is true. Aristotle's "because . . ." clause gives a reason for arguing from *ta legomena* only if they are all true, or we can distinguish the true ones among them; but he does not say how we are to do this. The claim implicit in the transition from *ta legomena* to *ta huparchonta* needs some defence. (Gauthier follows Rasso, quoted by Stewart, *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics*, in omitting *ta lethes* in b12 as a gloss, and Stewart is inclined to agree. They may not be right; *ta lethes* may just make explicit the claim implicit in *ta huparchonta*. But even if they are right, the implicit claim is still there.)

<sup>27</sup> Mutual adjustment as a goal of moral theory is defended by Rawls, in, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 46–51, who ascribes it to Aristotle. Sidgwick, in *The Methods of Ethics* 7th ed. (London, 1907), (esp. pp. 379–84), expects a theory to reveal intuitions which will sometimes verify and sometimes refute ordinary beliefs. Singer, in "Sidgwick and Reflective Equilibrium," *Monist* 58(1974):490–517, argues against Schneewind, "First Principles and Common-Sense Morality in Sidgwick's Ethics," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 45(1963) and Rawls that Sidgwick accords independent weight to intuitive first principles apart from their role of systematizing ordinary beliefs. Similar questions arise about Aristotle; though he has no explicit doctrine about intuitive ethical first principles, he sometimes expresses the kinds of doubts about dialectic which would make such intuitions welcome to him.

<sup>28</sup> I will say nothing more about this argument except that I think Aristotle presupposes the general view of soul expounded in the *DA*, and not a dualist view (as supposed by Gauthier ad loc.).

<sup>29</sup> There may be some evidence that Aristotle thinks his argument is more than merely dialectical. (1) At 1098b9–10 he describes the *ergon*-argument as a deductive argument, *ek tou sumperasmatos kai ex hōn ho logos*, as opposed to the argument from *ta legomena*, suggesting that the previous argument was not merely from *ta legomena*. (Cooper, p. 70 n, suggests that the contrast is between what we say about virtue, function, etc., and what we say about happiness itself. But the contrast Aristotle draws is between *ta legomena* and something else, not between two different sets of *legomena*). Of course deductive argument can also be dialectical, *Top.* 105a10–19; but here Aristotle seems to claim that his argument was not merely from common beliefs. (2) At 1167b29, 1170a13 Aristotle seeks an answer from a more *phusikon* inquiry, concerned with facts of human nature (cf. 1147a24, where it is contrasted with the "logical," purely dialectical examination preceding). (3) At 1174a11–14 Aristotle says he has finished the account of *ta legomena* about pleasure, and will begin again, *ap'archēs analabousin*, with his account of pleasure. This account is not said to be derived from *ta legomena*.

None of this argument is at all decisive, and Aristotle may not always have the same contrast in mind; but it suggests some places where he may be aware of the questions we are raising.

<sup>30</sup> 1179b23–31 says that someone who is to benefit from moral teaching must have been trained in good habits, to take pleasure and feel pain at the right things, like ground which is prepared for nourishing the seed; for someone who lives by affection (*kata pathos*) will not listen to or understand the instruction which advises him against it. Here as earlier Aristotle is unclear; he demands an upbringing which teaches good moral practices, but seems to want it as a *prerequisite* (rather than merely a desirable preparation) for moral instruction only because it produces self-control; and some bad upbringings might surely produce that.

Perhaps part of the trouble is that Aristotle does not clearly distinguish the different kinds of questions we might ask: (a) Can we offer the intemperate man a good reason (in the view of a rational person concerned with the intemperate man's interests) to change his aims and character? (b) Can we convince the intemperate man so that he actually changes his views? (c) Can we induce him to change his actions, or will he be incontinent? (a) is the relevant question about the scope of ethical reasoning; for the fact that an argument fails to convince someone to believe

something does not imply that it did not provide him with a good reason to believe it; he may just have failed, or refused, to see that it did.

<sup>31</sup> There is strong evidence in language and in cross-references (which I will not discuss) that the common books were originally written for the *EE*. It does not follow that their doctrine will all be consistent with the rest of the *EE*. When Aristotle wrote the *EN* (if it is later than the *EE*), he may have modified the doctrine of the common books without completely rewriting them. It is less likely that they are originally *EN* books rewritten, except for some major doctrinal conflicts with the *EE*, to fit in a later *EE*; but this possibility cannot be discounted unless we can be sure that Aristotle would be aware of a conflict.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle says that no one proves that health is good unless he is a sophist and not a doctor — for they (sophists) play the sophist with irrelevant (*allogrois*; cf. 1217a3–9) arguments. He can hardly be taken to suggest that the political scientist should do what the sophist is denounced for doing.

<sup>33</sup> The *EN* does not weaken Aristotle's claim that intuition is required for first principles of demonstrative science, 1140b31–1141a8, 1143b1–2. But since practical wisdom is not a demonstrative science, its first principles will not be grasped by intuition, and no analogue of intuition is necessarily required.

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